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Why, and Why Not?

—:—BY—:—

MAMIE LUKE.

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DEC 14 1882
No.
CITY OF WASHINGTON

LEND me your ears," (Mark Antony) nor keep them closely shut,
While I, New Yorkers, unto you some queries meekly put:

Pray, why do you not have your streets kept reasonably clean,
Nor walk in filth the city through, apparently serene?

Are you content to live and move in downright filthiness,
Whence spring disease, annoyances, discomforts and distress?

Content are you to roundly pay from out your yearly gains,
And yet for cleanliness depend on equinoctial rains?

Do you not know that servants will from masters take the cue,
That, masters lax, the serving men their duty ne'er will do?

Why will New Yorkers, proud and free, in fear and trembling cower
Before the ruffianly police, who so abuse their power?

When from their stoops they're dragged at night by those in blue and brass,
Thrown into loathsome cells for naught, why let the outrage pass?

Why suffer such brutality from servants in your pay—
Allow these brutes in uniform to bear despotic sway?

Why not pursue them legally, these ruffians of the club,
Teach them the lesson that the law, as well as they, can drub?

These hirelings, in your liveries, your masters have become,
Revolt, you should, show them their place, and ne'er to brutes succumb!

Why should New Yorkers e'er be ruled by hydra-headed "Boards,"
Whose rule is ruin, slow but sure, as history records?

Our "Park Commission," such a lot of wranglers, high in place—
New Yorkers quick should kick them out; the city they disgrace!

But, ah! e'en though our Central Park to ruin goes straightway,
Concern New Yorkers scarcely show, nor interest betray!

The noble Park our glory was, and gave our city fame,
In charge of these "Commissioners," t'will soon become our shame!

Why did New Yorkers e'er allow their charming Battery Park
To be usurped by the "L" road, a most rapacious shark?

Why don't they make the hideous thing a tax sufficient pay?
They should have got a princely sum when giving right of way!

Why don't they vigorously move, en masse, for five cent fares—
Assail the managerial band of bloated millionaires?

The lumbering hackney coaches our New Yorkers stick to—why?
Too clumsy they for crowded streets, the cost of riding high!

New Yorkers why not make a move, one for the public weal—
For cheap, convenient cabs now put your shoulders to the wheel!

All cannot be like him who said, "The public may be damned!"
A bloated hundred-millionaire, with self completely crammed!

Why will New Yorkers certain lines of horse cars patronize—
Ramshackle, filthy, beastly cars, which all their patience tries?

Why, as conductors, act for Sharp and niggard railroad men
Who "bobtails" run for greater gain, each car a cattle pen?

Condemn such managers and cars, in strongest terms, should they,
Accommodation fair demand, for which they roundly pay!

Why do you not investigate—eschew the "whitewash" brush—
Insane Asylum management, at which for shame we blush!

Sane persons now with lunatics are held in bondage dire—
From such a horror who is safe when enemies conspire?

Demand, should you, complete reform—be sure you get it, too—
"Step down and out," cry sternly to McDonald and his crew!

Why will New Yorkers still permit imprisonment for debt?
Among the barbarisms dropped should this forever set!

A civilized community for very shame should blush,
That barbarous laws poor debtors may in prison dungeons crush!

The House of (sore) Detention! why, New Yorkers, should it be?
Incarcerating witnesses is rank barbarity!

The brutal ruffian who assaults, if caught, finds ready bail,
Who witnesses the deed and tells, if poor, must go to jail!

A fitting West Side Market House New Yorkers sadly want,
Why don't they build an edifice of which they well may vaunt?

Their present one insults the name of Washington the Great,
An eyesore 'tis, a nuisance which New Yorkers should abate!

Why do they not of Croton get an adequate supply—
"More water! water!" hear they not the housewives' troubled cry?

An earnest move, and plenty they of water may acquire—
They'll need it sore some day when comes a conflagration dire!

Why should New Yorkers longer brook the poles unsightly, reared
By telegraphic companies, not over much revered?

Condemn, they should, these monster poles; removal expedite;
Obstructions, they, disfiguring, an eyesore each and fright!

New Yorkers, are you satisfied with "bosses" and "machines,"
With men who seek to gain their ends regardless of the means?

If not, at once assert yourselves; the exigency face;
Put down all "bosses," "halls" and "rings" that trade and "job" for place!

At hands of public servants why so weakly suffer wrong—
Can you in confidence expect to "suffer and be strong?"

Is it, New Yorkers, that, as charged, your spirit is no more—
That, tamely, you submit to wrong and imposition sore?

Ah, no! their spirit is not dead, but, sleeping, wears Death's hue;
It needs but to be roused to make New Yorkers dare and do!

P. S.—Whatever else you do or don't, New Yorkers, mind you this:
Don't let Bartholdi's statue go from the Metropolis!

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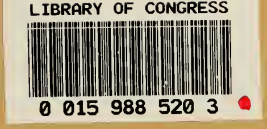
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